



**COMING TO A NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR YOU**  
***Foundation for Jewish Camp Reaches Out to North Shore Families in Their Backyards***

**New York, NY (September 17, 2009)** – The **Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC)**, the only public organization dedicated solely to nonprofit Jewish overnight camps, is launching a new program in an effort to share its mission and values with families in the Chicagoland area and its surrounding suburbs.

Dedicated to raising the reputation of nonprofit Jewish camps as well as increasing their enrollment in the Chicago area, FJC has partnered with consultant Jennifer Flink, a resident of Deerfield, IL. On behalf of FJC, Flink is taking a grassroots approach by spending time at area camps, working with synagogues to reach congregants, holding parlor meetings in towns such as Highland Park, Glencoe, Buffalo Grove, Northbrook, and Deerfield, as well as visiting with other community organizations in order to publicize the power and benefit of Jewish camp.

One of the goals of this outreach is to inform families that they can choose exactly what they want to get out of a nonprofit Jewish summer camp experience. This includes the level of Jewish affiliation they feel most comfortable with as well as the choice of a specialty camp versus a general program. Many families are unaware of the options available to them or that summer camps provide an environment for campers to live and experience religion in addition to traditional camp activities. Some camps are part of specific Jewish movements such as Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist, or Conservative, some are focused on Zionism and the role of Israel in Jewish life, while others focus on providing positive Jewish identity-building experiences through Jewish culture.

Why Jewish camp? Jewish camp is a critical part of a young person's Jewish education and identity. It inspires a lifetime commitment to the Jewish people, turning youth into spirited and engaged Jewish adults, and in turn, laying the groundwork for strong Jewish communities. Research shows that Jewish camp alumni are 50 percent more likely to join a synagogue, 90 percent more likely to join a Jewish community center, and twice as likely to donate \$100 or more to their local federation than Jewish adults who never went to a Jewish camp. They also make up the majority of their community's leaders.

"We want to educate parents on a personal level, that Jewish camp is an important part of their children's education and lives," explains Interim FJC CEO, Maggie Bar-Tura, "In addition to allowing them to learn about and explore their religion, these camps also foster independence, leadership, community and team building."

This one-on-one approach directed by Flink is just the latest in a succession of initiatives FJC has on the ground in Chicago with the goal of elevating and galvanizing the field of Jewish nonprofit camp in the Chicago area. One of the tools that has met with success is the Campership Incentive Program which has provided cash incentives to almost 12,000 children nationally. Funded by a \$25 million donation from an anonymous Chicago donor, FJC created partnerships with local and national federations, religious movements, camps, and foundations to execute the initiative. The partnerships offer up to \$1,250 for first-time campers and \$750 for second-timers in some communities. The program was piloted in the Chicagoland in 2006 and has expanded significantly since.

The Camper-Centric Initiative was also piloted in the Chicago area. This innovative multi-year project empowers Jewish summer camps to focus their efforts on their "customers" - campers and their families. It integrates strategies of consumer market research, professional skill development, and targeted grantmaking. By employing private sector tools of responsive customer service and focused investment to maximize the summer experience, camps are better able to retain current campers and attract new ones. Some of the projects have included: upgraded and renovated sports facilities, camp-wide environmentally friendly lighting upgrades and new computers.

Communities can set up a visit with Jennifer Flink via email: [jennifer.flink@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.flink@gmail.com)

*The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) is the only public organization dedicated solely to nonprofit Jewish overnight camps. FJC employs a variety of strategies toward a single goal: to increase the number of children in Jewish summer camps. To this end, the Foundation creates inspiring camp leaders, expands access to and intensifies demand for camp, and develops programs to strengthen camps across the Jewish spectrum in North America. Through strategic partnerships on local and national levels, FJC raises the profile of Jewish camp and serves as a central resource for parents and organizations alike. FJC works with more than 150 camps, 70,000 campers, and 10,000 counselors across North America to further its mission. [www.jewishcamp.org](http://www.jewishcamp.org)*

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